

KATRINA RESPONSE – Monday, September 05, 2005

Update from Health Alert Network message of Friday September 2, 2005

The Nebraska Health and Human Services System is working with the Douglas County Health Department, Lancaster County Health Department and private providers to prepare for the arrival of evacuees from storm ravaged areas. The state could be called upon at any time over the next several weeks to accept evacuees living now in neighboring states, and federal officials have stated that Omaha is a likely entry point for storm evacuees.

Health care workers available to assist potential evacuees in Nebraska should contact the Lincoln-Lancaster County Medical Society at 402-483-4800 or the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department at 402-441-8000. In Omaha, volunteers can contact The United Way, which is coordinating the Medical Reserve Corps response at 402-522-7970. Should the state be called to house and care for evacuees in other communities, additional contact information for registering medical volunteers will be made available.

If you have health or medical supplies that can be offered to evacuees arriving in Nebraska, please go to <http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/han/hanindex.htm> and register. NHHSS is working closely with the Nebraska Emergency Management agency and local jurisdictions to meet the health and medical needs of evacuees.

In addition to local activities, the Federal Government is coordinating the recruiting and deployment of medical personnel to Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Due to the extraordinary need for medical assistance, federal officials have accelerated the available means for registering potential health care volunteers. This new and temporary registration process supersedes steps already in place for Nebraska health care providers to volunteer to assist in an emergency. The Federal Government is seeking multidisciplinary healthcare professionals and relief personnel with expertise in the following areas: Clinical Physicians, Physician Chiefs of Staff, Physician's Assistants or Nurse Practitioners, RNs, LPNs, Nursing Assistants/Nursing Support Technicians, Nursing Staff Directors, Respiratory Therapists, Psychologists, Pharmacists, Dietitians, Dentists, Epidemiologists, Environmental Health, Social Workers, Veterinarians, Administration/Finance Officers, Chaplain/Social Worker, Patient Transporters/Volunteers, Facility Managers, Housekeepers, Safety Officers, IT/Communications Officers, Security Officers, Medical Clerks, Supply Managers, Coroners, Dental Forensics, EMT's/Paramedics, Lab Technicians, Radiology Technicians, Medical Examiners, Morticians, Mortuary Assistants and Mental Health Workers. Medical volunteers will serve as non-paid, temporary federal employees, and will therefore be eligible for coverage under the Federal Tort Claims Act for liability coverage and Worker's Compensation while functioning as federal employees. Although no salary can be offered, travel and per diem will be offered. The web page includes a form that can be completed and submitted online: <https://volunteer.ccrf.hhs.gov/> or call toll-free at 866-528-6334. The Office of the Surgeon General will not respond to individual inquiries, but will contact those who submit an application and meet the requirements and needs of the field.

Individuals interested in volunteering as part of the coordinated federal response should be prepared to expect the following conditions, including: 12-hour shifts, long periods of standing, housing in tents with limited or no access to showers and air conditioning, bedroll sleep accommodations, and food supplies that may be limited to military meals ready to eat.

Those without medical training but who are interested in volunteering in storm-affected areas can find more information on how to help online at <http://www.USAFreedomCorps.gov> or by calling 877-USA-CORPS.

In Summary, if you or any of your staff wish to volunteer your medical expertise in Lincoln, call 402-483-4800 or 402-441-8000.

In Summary, if you or any of your staff wish to volunteer your medical expertise in Omaha, call 402-552-7970.

If you or any of your staff wish to volunteer for deployment to Mississippi, Louisiana, or Alabama, apply through the Office of the Surgeon General at <https://volunteer.ccrf.hhs.gov/>.

If you would like to donate medical supplies or equipment to evacuees, go to <http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/han/hanindex>.

Please remember that relief efforts will continue for an undetermined amount of time so you may not be contacted immediately.

Thank you for your willingness to consider these requests.